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## ABSTRACT

This report on vocational education in Kansas covers the following four areas: evaluation of programs, services, and activities proposed in the state plan for the year under review; analysis of policies for distribution of Federal funds; review of the state's evaluation activities; and assessment of the extent to which employment and training programs represent an integrated and coordinated approach. The report focuses on some implications of recent studies for education, including the desirability of all students learning basic skills, the avoidance of early tracking which limits options for some students, the necessity of helping students understand that the world of work changes rapidly and they must prepare for it by acquiring generic rather than specific skills, and the necessity of some vocational education for all students. Recommendations made regarding distribution of categorical funds include relating program improvement to research by hiring a full-time staff person, distributing funds with a focus on strengthening programs that meet identified needs, including finance and planning persons on the committee that reviews grant proposals, and identifying and carrying over model solutions to other areas. The study also recommended that the State Board of Education consider alternatives to the distribution of funds to secondary schools, directing funds to identified program needs on a short-term basis. Finally, the report recommends that evaluation procedures should be upgraded and that increased emphasis be placed on coordination of employment and training programs. (KC)

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# Through Evaluation



**ANNUAL EVALUATION  
OF  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
IN KANSAS  
1982-83**

Prepared  
by  
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January, 1984

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Implications of Recent Studies for Education

1. There needs to be more assurance that all students are developing the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics applicable to the world of work.
2. Secondary education should be *primarily*, but not exclusively, career information oriented rather than job specific, with emphasis on understanding the importance of work and the development of job-seeking skills. Strategies for teaching would include some form of required work experience.
3. Job-specific training should be viewed as supplemental to the basic skills rather than an alternative or an escape hatch and should probably be limited to the twelfth grade.
4. Students should be taught self-assessment skills to facilitate the career decision-making process.
5. Schools must provide an articulation of career paths to bridge the gap between education and work for *all* students.
6. Students should be given an understanding of how rapidly changes occur, the impact those changes will have on their lives, and the importance of adaptability to change. Efforts should be made to eliminate the stereotype that the formal education process (K-12) equips students for life.
7. The school needs to evaluate itself concerning the extent to which it provides a positive and affirming environment for those it serves.
8. Schools should provide instruction in the skills required to foster a positive and productive home environment.
9. The education system must sustain a constant evaluation process in order for it to be adaptable to change rather than reactive to crises. As a part of that process, contact with former students must be maintained to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
10. The education system must consciously work toward eliminating both subtle and overt tracking of students in the early years of schooling, a practice which limits the options of many students.

11. Intensive effort should be given to attracting capable students into the teaching profession, paying adequate salaries, and counseling out of the profession those who are ineffective. Consideration should be given to changing the definition of the school year in order to eliminate the public bias toward paying a twelve-month salary for nine months work.
12. Every student should be expected to complete a core curriculum that is rigorous, but attainable.
13. The concept of vocational education and its teaching strategies are valuable to all students in achieving their career objectives.

## Recommendations Regarding Distribution of Categorical Funds

1. The status of research as it relates to program improvement should be elevated and the task of coordination to be given the full attention of at least one staff person. The responsibilities of the research coordinator would include, in addition to monitoring project activities, inservice training in effective research techniques for prospective grant applicants, and establishing an effective strategy for dissemination of research findings.
2. The State Department of Education should address the procedure for distribution of categorical funds with a focus on strengthening those aspects of the process identified in the findings of this study, such as goal setting, strategies for implementation, needs assessment, scheduling, applicant credentials, budgeting, status reports, evaluation, and dissemination.
3. It is further recommended that the committee which reviews the grant proposals include staff members responsible for planning and finance to ensure that project intentions match with needs as determined in the State Plan for Vocational Education and that financial projections are appropriate to the task. It would also be appropriate to consider the selection of some knowledgeable business and industry personnel for this process.
4. The research coordinator should also design a system to identify those research activities

which produce a finding or solution that might be applicable or "transportable" to similar situations statewide. In addition, it is recommended that a portion of the categorical funds be reserved to employ the successful grantee, on a per diem basis, to assist schools with common concerns, in applying the strategies that were studied in the project. The rationale for this recommendation is that few presenters can as effectively teach a new concept as can the one who tried it and succeeded.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM FUNDS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

1. It is recommended that the State Board of Education consider alternatives to the present policy regarding distribution of state categorical aid to secondary schools. Such alternatives should include fiscal incentives to schools to improve and expand existing programs, and to add programs where there is a need. Further, such funding should be short-term and directed toward a specific objective rather than program maintenance.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING EVALUATION**

1. The State Department of Education should provide the leadership and focus for refinement of the evaluation and school improvement process.
2. The State Department of Education should ensure that evaluation findings impact on long-range planning.
3. The State Department of Education and local educational institutions should develop procedures to facilitate greater involvement of advisory committees in evaluation and planning.
4. Whenever possible, qualified independent third party evaluators should be utilized to evaluate programs and institutions according to measurable goals and objectives.
5. The State Department of Education should provide leadership for implementation of a plan for program and institutional improvement based, in part, on evaluation findings.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COORDINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS**

1. It is recommended that the State Board of Education seek clarification of responsibility for coordination of employment and training efforts.
2. It is recommended that the State Board of Education identify factors in federal legislation that limit coordination and take an active role in facilitating legislation to bring about necessary changes.
3. It is imperative that the State Board maintain its initiative for the establishment of a policy review procedure as a strategy to improve the employment and training system.



# THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

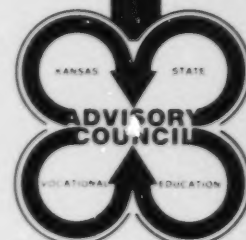
## Authorization

The Kansas Advisory Council on Vocational Education is authorized in accordance with Public Law 94-482 and was established in Kansas by KSA 72-4409-10. In part, the federal law reads that any state which applies for funds to support vocational education programs must appoint an advisory council.

## Membership

Council members are appointed by the State Board of Education. The Council is to be composed of a minimum of twenty-four (24) members appointed to assure representation from agriculture, management, labor, industrial and economic development agencies, community colleges, area vocational schools, school boards, and other areas related to vocational education.

| Name              | Representative Category                                                                                                                   | Location      |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Michael Lavelle   | Problems of Management                                                                                                                    | Wichita       |
| Morris Eastland   | Problems of Labor                                                                                                                         | Gardner       |
| Eldon Pankratz    | Problems of Agriculture                                                                                                                   | Hillsboro     |
| James Dahmen      | Industrial & Economic Development                                                                                                         | Parsons       |
| Floyd West        | Community Colleges                                                                                                                        | Chanute       |
| Carl Heinrich     | Higher Ed., AVTS, Technical Institutes, Postsecondary                                                                                     | El Dorado     |
| Gary Withrow      | Special Knowledge of vocational education but not involved in administration                                                              | Hutchinson    |
| Dean Oberhelman   | Vocational education programs in comprehensive secondary schools                                                                          | Clay Center   |
| Heber Ramer       | Non-profit private school                                                                                                                 | Hesston       |
| Dale Shipps       | Vocational guidance & counseling                                                                                                          | Dodge City    |
| David McKune      | State correctional institutions                                                                                                           | Hutchinson    |
| Elizabeth McPhail | Vocational teacher                                                                                                                        | Manhattan     |
| Dean Stucky       | Superintendent or other administrator                                                                                                     | Wichita       |
| Betty Loudon      | Local school board                                                                                                                        | St. Francis   |
| Richard Hernandez | State Council on Employment and Training                                                                                                  | Topeka        |
| Lydia Gonzales    | Large concentration of disadvantaged; economically, culturally, socially, and academically, and those of limited English-speaking ability | Garden City   |
| Ada Williams      | Same as above                                                                                                                             | Kansas City   |
| Sharilyn Young    | Women with experience in understanding the problems of job discrimination, particularly among minorities                                  | Wichita       |
| Susan Rodgers     | Same as above                                                                                                                             | Topeka        |
| Constance Buller  | Special needs of physically and mentally handicapped                                                                                      | Piqua         |
| Marcia Biggs      | General public with knowledge about needs of the poor and disadvantaged                                                                   | Madison       |
| Mary Schild       | Same as above                                                                                                                             | Herington     |
| Shawn Casey       | Vocational education student                                                                                                              | Overland Park |
| Paul Moore        | Proprietary schools                                                                                                                       | Wichita       |



## **Funding**

The State Advisory Council is funded entirely from federal appropriations made available through the original Act. This money is used to employ an office staff of two persons, and to conduct activities essential to the completion of the Council's program of work.

## **Functions**

The functions of the Advisory Council are clearly defined in legislation. Those responsibilities include:

- Consulting with employers, educators, students, citizen agencies, and organizations on the preparation, conduct, and evaluation of the State's vocational education programs.

- Listening to the expression of local ideas and concerns relating to vocational education by holding at least one public meeting yearly.

- Advising the State Board of Education on development of State Plan for annual and long-range planning; advising the State Board of Education on policy matters arising in the administration of the State Plan; and advising relevant state officials as to needed changes in legislation, funding, etc., which affect vocational education.

- Evaluating the effectiveness and accomplishments of vocational education programs at state and local levels in terms of goals and objectives contained in the State Plan.

- Recommending changes in programs, services and activities as may be warranted by the evaluation.

- Assisting local advisory committees in building their effectiveness.

- Reporting to the State Board of Education, and through the Board to the United States Department of Education and the National Advisory Council, on the annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the State's vocational education program, services and activities.

In addition to these prescribed functions, the Council has chosen to make advocacy for vocational education one of its primary concerns.

## **Accountability for Function**

The Council scheduled and conducted five business sessions, with each one given to a specific area of focus. Those focal points were organization for effectiveness, evaluation of vocational education, statewide planning, accountability, and a review of Council activities. The average attendance at meetings was 16 members.

Four members of the Council served on a special committee appointed by the State Board of Education to develop a master plan for vocational and postsecondary education. This committee, which met twenty times during a period of 9 months produced a series of recommendations relating to organization, governance, and evaluation of vocational and postsecondary education.

Council members and staff conducted public meetings in Emporia, Manhattan, Arkansas City, Salina, Beloit, Dodge City, and Atchison to assess the perceptions of business and industry relative to vocational education. The significant finding from these contacts was that students enrolling in vocational education are ill-prepared in the basics and that their attitudes toward working are not conducive to employment.

The Council staff developed and distributed 675 handbooks for use by local advisory committees in facilitating more active involvement in program evaluation. The guidelines propose a four-meeting sequence focusing on program content and support services, technical integrity of equipment and facilities, local employment needs, and product assessment.

The Council developed and planned for implementation in 1984 the format for a series of workshops to be conducted for local advisory committees. The workshops are designed to provide instruction in the use of the handbook and to teach skills in effective group interaction.

The Council produced its annual report to the State Board of Education, the focus of which was analysis of the coordination among employment and training providers. The report has been recognized nationally for its potential impact on coordination and linkage.

The Council was represented by six members on the 107 State Plan committee which, in addition to reviewing the state plan in its development, served as a panel which monitored the accomplishment of goals and objectives. The result has been a plan which can be used effectively as a management tool.

Two members of the Council serve on the State Council on Employment and Training, one as an official representative and the other by virtue of membership in another organization. These members have done much toward facilitating linkage between the educational delivery system and programs administered under the Job Training Partnership Act.

In response to a request from local advisory committees, the Council produced a video-tape presentation relative to programs available in vocational education. Further, 6,000 organizational handbooks and 12,000 informational brochures have been distributed since their original publication in 1981.

The Council was represented at three regional and national meetings. Major presentations on strategies for local committee involvement were presented at two of these meetings.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The State Advisory Council for Vocational Education herewith acknowledges the generous assistance of members of the vocational staff of the State Department of Education. They have provided invaluable support through constant feedback and open dialogue with the Council. Their dedication to achieving quality vocational education in the State of Kansas has been demonstrated repeatedly.

Further, it must be noted that, while this report focuses on several areas of concern which are perceived to need improvement, there are many quality programs in place. These efforts continually yield skilled workers who become successful in the employment sector. Those who have contributed their talents to program design, management, and delivery deserve a most sincere commendation.

Finally, the Council extends its appreciation to Joyce Dunlap who, in concert with staff, developed this report. Her genuine interest, perceptive and articulate writing, and perseverance contributed greatly to its completion.

## INTRODUCTION

The State Advisory Council for Vocational Education is required by law to conduct an annual evaluation of vocational education. Areas to be addressed in this report include evaluation of programs, services, and activities proposed in the state plan for the year under review; analysis of policies for distribution of federal funds; review of the state's evaluation activities; and assessment of the extent to which employment and training programs represent an integrated and coordinated approach.

The Council determined several years ago that greater benefits would be accrued from a report that addressed specific issues thoroughly rather than one which superficially treated the broader concepts implied in enabling legislation. Subsequent reports have successively focused rather rigorously on guidance, the need for a policy for vocational education, and coordination among employment and training providers.

This year the Council has elected to focus primarily on the role of vocational education in the secondary school. The initiative for this investigation was provided by recent studies on secondary education as well as the current master planning activities of the State Board of Education.

Another area of concentration in the report is the impact of funding policies on the quality of secondary programs and the extent to which disbursement of categorical funds yields a useful product. The latter issue also relates to a measure of the achievement of goals and objectives identified in the state plan.

Admittedly, this kind of specificity limits the scope of the report. However, it is felt that a thorough analysis of a manageable piece of an issue will ultimately have greater impact on the state's educational program.

# CHAPTER I

## Implications of Recent Studies for Education

The state of education in this nation has generated numerous books, articles and reports calling for reform in our public schools. The current literature indicates that there needs to be a redefinition or re-examination of the goals of education with an emphasis on problems at the secondary level. A majority of the writings do not speak in any depth about vocational education. However, there are some implied suggestions for its future role. The purpose of this paper is to examine these recent works and to point out areas of concern for all educators and how they affect vocational education.

### Trend Toward Tracking

The trend in the past has been an increasing separation of students into vocational and academic tracks. Along with this separation a third category of students has arisen and that is the group in a program of general education. According to a recent report (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983) it is estimated that the number of high school students in this category has increased from 12 percent in 1964 to 42 percent in 1979. As we move further into the information age, this increase in the number of students selecting the general education option becomes more critical.

More and more young people emerge from high school ready neither for college nor for work. This predicament becomes more acute as the knowledge base continues its rapid expansion, the numbers of jobs shrink, and new jobs demand greater sophistication and preparation. (*A Nation At Risk*, p.12, 1983)

The recommendation found throughout the literature is that this three track system should be eliminated and that all students should be provided the same core curriculum.

Eliminating the vocational track does not mean abolishing all vocational courses. Indeed, many of these courses are enriching and useful. They provide excellent options for a wide range of students and should be strengthened, not diminished. What we should eliminate are discriminatory labels and tracking patterns that assume some students need no further education and that cut off their future options. We would eliminate the narrow 'marketable' skills courses that have little intellectual substance, courses that give students 'hands-on' experience while denying them a decent education. (Boyer, p. 127, 1983)

The belief by so many educators that some can think and others can only work is discriminatory tracking which has created students who can do neither. To lead a student into a job specific vocational program which provides, if offered at all, a diluted version of math, science, and language in this explosive, technological era, is a disservice to the student. "Merely to offer blind-alley employment and obsolescing trades to youngsters in a dynamic society is to exchange one kind of subservience and dependence for another" (Cohen and Brawer, p. 217, 1982).

### Changing Technology

Many vocational educators will argue that there are those in such dire economic straits that they need a specific skill and if it is not learned in high school, they may have no other opportunity for further education. An examination of what high schools can realistically offer and what the market place requires should lead educators to question the ability of high schools to fulfill this role. When our own industries are having difficulty reorganizing and modernizing, how can we expect high schools to afford the facilities and instructors to build quality programs which can keep up with the changing technology? An even more important question is whether or not a specific skill will offer a lifetime of employment? "Now, some experts predict that the life expectancy of a skill is ten years or less" (*The Information Society*, p. 20, 1982).

Goodlad suggests high school vocational education in the twentieth century is where the home was in the late nineteenth century.

It became impossible, about a hundred years ago, for families to provide their children with the skills required for gainful employment in the emerging workplace. Similarly it is not feasible today for schools to prepare specifically for the vast array of jobs available and increasing. To prepare youths for jobs whose requirements are obvious and relatively simple is to produce workers who will quickly become obsolescent. (Goodlad, p. 322, 1983)

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in a study, "High School and Beyond", it was found vocational and technical students drop out of high school more frequently than those in other educational tracks. Most left in the 11th grade and many were unemployed or working in low-skilled jobs (*Manpower and Vocational Education Weekly*, December 8, 1983). Again, many would use this to support job specific

education in high school. However, one must question whether, without a strong academic background and with a vocational training which doesn't allow for change in the workplace, high schools are not perpetuating a system where students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds have little hope of successful and transitional lifetime employment. "As John Dewey said almost a century ago, vocational training, training for particular jobs, is not the education of free men and women" (Alder, p. 7, 1982).

### A Role for Vocational Education

While this is not a flattering picture of high school vocational education, it must be remembered that these educators are not suggesting that it has no place. In fact, their recommendations hold a challenging and exciting future for vocational educators. "The conditions that concern us today - swiftly advancing technology; economic competition in a global arena; the sudden obsolescence of skills - will be even more intense tomorrow" (Action for Excellence, p. 14, 1983).

These educators are calling for an increase in requirements in math, science and language. "We must demand the best effort and performance from all students, whether they are gifted or less able, affluent or disadvantaged, whether destined for college, the farm, or industry" (A Nation at Risk, p. 24, 1983). This does not necessarily mean that all students will be taking identical classes. It suggests, rather, that all students need a strong foundation in the basics, and it is the responsibility of today's educators to design

*The teaching style vocational educators pride themselves on and which students enjoy, applied education, is a technique which should be incorporated into learning throughout the years of formal education.*

rigorous and meaningful instruction in these areas that meet the need of all students and not just the so-called academically oriented. "While students may tackle these core courses in different ways, the basic content of the core should be the same for all" (Boyer, p. 128, 1983). The essentials of a good education include the ability to communicate, to reason and to be prepared for a lifetime of learning.

There is a fear among educators that the "back-to-basics" trend will lead to the addition of more sophisticated courses and neglect teaching the basics in an effective way so that all students will learn, retain, and be able to apply what they have learned. The teaching style vocational educators pride themselves on and which students enjoy, applied

education, is a technique which should be incorporated into learning throughout the years of formal education. Vocational educators could have an insightful and positive effect on educational curriculum. A blended education consisting of vocational and academic education with an emphasis on stricter requirements would be best for the majority of students.

There is a segment of the student population which includes the handicapped, learning disabled, socially and economically disadvantaged and juvenile offenders, for whom vocational training has often, and mistakenly, been considered the only appropriate educational program. While there seems to be some logic in identifying vocational education as the avenue to take in giving these students employable skills, the statistics do not show that vocational educators are very successful with this group.



The high dropout rate in vocational education is often excused since there is a high number of students with previous failures. This just avoids the issue of how best this population can be educated. The answer is not multi-track or diluted curricula but administering programs with sensitivity and flexibility in ways that recognize whatever differences students have. These students must be given a special kind of help other than a remedial system that teaches what a student has not been taught or has not been taught well. True remediation, in this sense, implies recognition that students do not have equal ability, and that special efforts must be used consistently throughout the educational experience to compensate for individual differences. (Adler, 1982). Further, it means that these students should not be destined to a special track which deprives them of a quality education.

The above statements are not intended to be an indictment of vocational education. They are problems which all educators must address. The vocational educators' first contact is long after students with special needs have entered the school system, and they are no better equipped to cope with those needs than any other teacher. Vocational teachers also often carry the same prejudices of education in general... that certain students are not educable. "It is in

elementary school that dropout prevention must begin, with special emphasis on language, with continuous assessment of student progress, and with skilled counseling" (Boyer, p. 245, 1983). For students in high school Boyer suggests special schools solely for educating these students or programs within the high school with heavy emphasis on individualized learning.

Vocational education should be designed for all students. At present the academic/vocational split is so pervasive that there is little chance for a student in the academic track to enroll in vocational classes and those in vocational education find difficulty enrolling in the academics. "Some schools...get around this problem by scheduling sections of academic courses specifically for vocational students. The net effect of this was, of course, to separate even further the two sides of the academic/vocational division" (Goodlad, 1983).

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*Students will benefit from broader education where the academics are deemed important and recognized as necessary to produce workers who will be able to meet the challenge of change in the market place.*

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Vocational and academic education must be blended together to meet the needs of all students. Students will benefit from broader education where the academics are deemed important and recognized as necessary to produce workers who will be able to meet the challenge of change in the market place. Students need to know about the historical, social and economic aspects of work. Young people today cannot see a connection between production and consumption. They have little concept of what the world of work is about. This is truly an opportunity for vocational educators to make a significant impact on the education of all students. (Boyer, 1983, Goodlad, 1983)

It has been proposed that all students should spend a portion of each high school year in the study of work which goes far beyond career exploration. This would include such topics as the ethic of work and its economic impact, as well as emerging job opportunities. The study would actually involve work both in the private sector for pay and in the public sector in the form of volunteerism.

The goal of the new 'Carnegie' unit would be to help students see that they are not only autonomous individuals but also members of a larger community to which they are accountable. The program would tap an enormous source of unused talent and suggest to young people that they are needed. It would help break the isolation of the adolescent, bring young people into contact with the elderly, the sick, the poor and the



homeless, as well as acquaint them with neighborhood and governmental issues. (Boyer, p. 210, 1983)

This revolutionary concept would take a great deal of cooperation among teachers, administrators, parents and the public and will require substantial human and monetary resources. As part of a global community with a rapidly advancing technology we must give these suggested changes serious consideration.

School is a complex place and the suggestion of change is frightening. To alter one part of the system may mean change in several other areas. "But the American high school is more than 'a system'; it is a human environment, a place where young people come together for learning. Therefore, order and freedom must be carefully balanced, as must rigidity and flexibility" (Boyer, p. 248, 1983).

#### *Conclusions*

It is extremely difficult to make specific recommendations from the foregoing information. Some dramatic changes are implied by the authors of the various studies, not the least of which is the point at which vocational education becomes job-specific. Another implication includes the need to question the total educational program because it all impacts on what happens at the secondary level, vocational education included. Serious dialogue with vocational education personnel in the State Department of Education has yielded some agreement that the net result of this study would best be identification of potential implications for planning in the future. A related imperative would be a commitment by the State Board of Education to keep the issues addressed in mind as decisions are made relative to education policies, particularly as they impact on vocational education.

#### *Assumptions About the Work Place*

1. The work place is becoming more sophisticated and the rate of that escalation is increasing each year.
2. Technology is transforming occupations, a factor that makes the planning of training programs more difficult.

3. The transformation influenced by technology does not impact only on jobs requiring training; it is producing a new group of jobs requiring no formal training.
4. Economic competition is no longer intra-national, but rather inter-national and the production of consumer goods in many other countries will have a significant impact on jobs in this country.

### Potential Implications

1. There needs to be more assurance that all students are developing the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics applicable to the world of work.
2. Secondary education should be *primarily*, but not exclusively, career information oriented rather than job specific, with emphasis on understanding the importance of work and the development of job-seeking skills. Strategies for teaching would include some form of required work experience.
3. Job-specific training should be viewed as supplemental to the basic skills rather than an alternative or an escape hatch and should probably be limited to the twelfth grade.
4. Students should be taught self-assessment skills to facilitate the career decision-making process.
5. Schools must provide an articulation of career paths to bridge the gap between education and work for *all* students.
7. The school needs to evaluate itself concerning the extent to which it provides a positive and affirming environment for those it serves.
8. Schools should provide instruction in the skills required to foster a positive and productive home environment.
9. The education system must sustain a constant evaluation process in order for it to be adaptable to change rather than reactive to crises. As a part of that exercise, contact with former students must be maintained to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
10. The education system must consciously work toward eliminating both subtle and overt tracking of students in the early years of schooling, a practice which limits the options of many students.
11. Intensive effort should be given to attracting capable students into the teaching profession, paying adequate salaries, and counseling out of the profession those who are ineffective. Consideration should be given to changing the definition of the school year in order to eliminate the public bias toward paying a twelve-month salary for nine months work.
12. Every student should be expected to complete a core curriculum that is rigorous, but attainable.
13. The concept of vocational education and its teaching strategies are valuable to all students in achieving their career objectives.



6. Students should be given an understanding of how rapidly changes occur, the impact those changes will have on their lives, and the importance of adaptability to change. Efforts should be made to eliminate the stereotype that the formal education process (K-12) equips students for life.

A significant question raised by these implications is whether the school will continue to mirror society, or serve to improve upon what exists. If it is to do the latter, changes are in order.

## CHAPTER II

# The Impact of Funding Practices on Vocational Education

The previous chapter dealt with some highly provocative issues relating to the status of the educational program. Serious contemplation of any significant changes will necessarily require consideration of creative alternatives to present funding practices. This portion of the annual report will provide a review of certain aspects of disbursement policies in relationship to improvement of the educational program of the state.

In the past the Council has dealt with distribution of funds from the perspective of statewide employment and training policy, specifically referencing the impact of a number of monetary resources on training efforts along with apparent discontinuity among those activities. Concerns that have been treated only peripherally are distribution of vocational categorical funds and the effect that general funding policies have on program quality.

The purpose of this section is to review the specific activities which have been supported with funds made available in FY 1983 under sections 131 (Research), 132 (Exemplary and Innovative Programs), 133 (Curriculum Development), 135 (Personnel Training), and 140 (Special Programs for the Disadvantaged), and to analyze the findings of a survey designed to rate the importance of federal and state funds to vocational program operation in general.

### Categorical or Specifically Targeted Funds

In its last annual report, the Council provided a brief historical perspective of vocational education which suggested that one of the more significant changes in vocational education was a rather dramatic redirection in the mid 1960's toward the person rather than the program....it became "more humanized". Enacting legislation reflected that posture by including significant funding for special populations as well as for research to design solutions which could resolve program deficiencies or improve program quality.

In practice, the distribution of these funds is based on proposals submitted, primarily by educational institutions, to the State Department of Education in response to a set of priorities identified in the State Plan. The announcement requesting proposals also includes instructions to the writer on how to apply for such funds. Such applications are generally reviewed by a panel of readers which recommends those projects they feel should be funded. The State Department staff then notifies the successful applicants of their grant awards.

The grantee is required to submit quarterly fiscal and

narrative reports on the status of the activity to aid the Research Coordinating Unit in monitoring the progress of the project. A summary judgment on the status of each project is also made by program specialists at quarterly intervals.

Forty-four project files were examined to determine the extent to which they provided a clear response to an identified need, an issue of national significance, or a specific intent in the State Plan for Vocational Education. Perceptions were also recorded regarding proposal implementation, needs assessment, time schedules, personnel credentials, budgets, status reports, evaluation, and dissemination. Observations were shared with personnel on the state staff to ascertain whether or not the information file is accurate and if they might have additional data to supplement what was found in the record.

The Council's intent, in reviewing these activities, was to ascertain the extent to which the organization and structure of the system for distribution of these funds yields a useful product which will contribute to the quality of the vocational program. A number of exceptional studies were identified. However, several concerns have been identified with respect to this area of funding.

### Findings

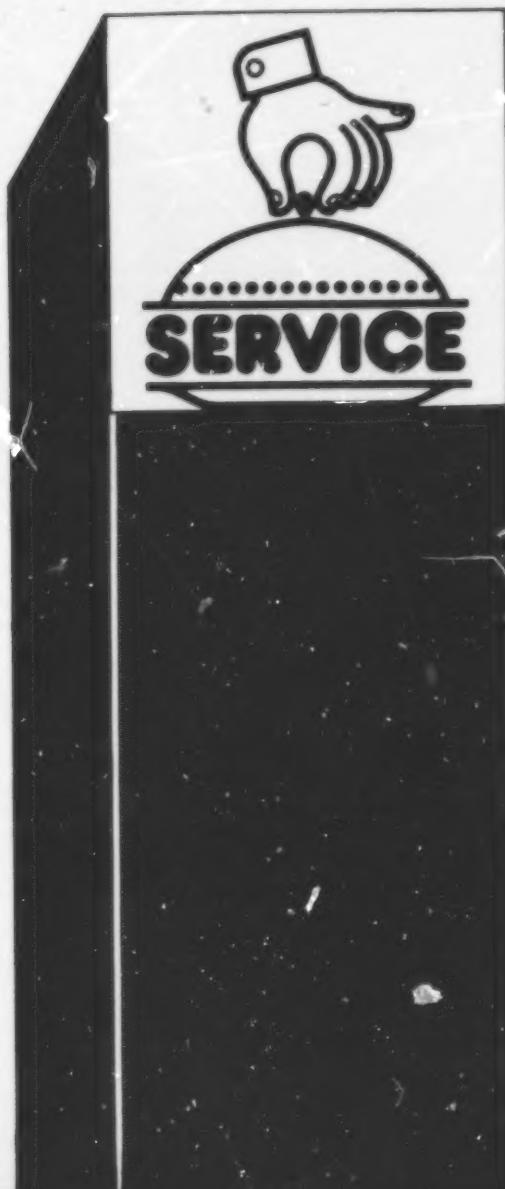
1. Management: The staff member in the State Department who is responsible for research coordination is given a 40% time allocation for the task. Legislatively imposed staff reductions have combined job specifications to the extent that many important aspects of State Department leadership can only be superficially addressed. Members of the staff have, in many cases, conceived of superior alternatives to present methods, only to watch them fall victim to time constraints. Hence, they experience the frustration of knowing a better way to accomplish the task, but lack personnel resources to facilitate a change.
2. Goals and Objectives: In many cases the project objectives did not provide sufficient detail to indicate that the applicant had a clear understanding of the problem. Furthermore, those statements of intent were not written in performance terms and were generally difficult to measure.
3. Strategy for Implementation: The applicant, in many cases, simply restated objectives rather than charting a course of action toward the goal.

4. Needs Assessment: While there is apparent justification through the state planning process for the various research and development activities that are funded from these resources, there is little evidence that the grantees have sought related research findings that apply to their situation in order to avoid replication of effort.
5. Time Schedule: The majority of the proposals lacked what can be described as a true time schedule. A contributing factor to this is presumed to be the absence of an adequate strategy for implementation identified in the second finding above.
6. Personnel: The majority of the grant applicants did not provide resumes which contained a description of how their qualifications were pertinent to the proposed topic.
7. Budget: The proposed budgetary items do not appear to be based on supportable expenditures, but rather on rough estimates.
8. Status Reports: The majority of the project grantees filed the appropriate quarterly reports which are an integral part of the monitoring process. However, the lack of planning detail mentioned earlier was reflected in these reports.
9. Evaluation: The majority of the proposals either lacked a plan for evaluation, or if such a plan was included, it was carried out sporadically.
10. Dissemination: There does not appear to be a standard procedure for disseminating the results of effective research internally (within the State Department) or externally (to those who might apply it to similar situations).

### Recommendations

The State of Kansas allocated approximately \$450,000 to the activities conducted under the previously identified sections of vocational legislation. The Council perceives the need for greater fiscal and product accountability in some areas of this exercise. To that end the following recommendations are offered:

1. The status of research as it relates to program improvement should be elevated and the task of coordination be given the full attention of at least one staff person. The responsibilities of the research coordinator would include, in addition to monitoring project activities, inservice training in effective research techniques for prospective grant applicants, and establishing an effective strategy for dissemination of research findings.
2. The State Department of Education should address the procedure for distribution of categorical funds with a focus on strengthening those aspects of the process identified in the findings of this study, such as goal setting, strategies for implementation, needs assessment, scheduling, applicant credentials, budgeting, status reports, evaluation, and dissemination.
3. It is further recommended that the committee which reviews the grant proposals include staff members responsible for planning and finance to ensure that project intentions match with needs as determined in the State Plan for Vocational Education and that financial projections are appropriate to the task. It would also be appropriate to consider the selection of some knowledgeable business and industry personnel for this process.



4. The research coordinator should also design a system to identify those research activities which produce a finding or solution that might be applicable or "transportable" to similar situations statewide. In addition, it is recommended that a portion of the categorical funds be reserved to employ the successful grantee, on a per diem basis, to assist schools with common concerns in applying the strategies that were studied in the project. The rationale for this recommendation is that few presenters can as effectively teach a new concept as can the one who tried it and succeeded.

The following procedural steps are suggested as a possible means to accomplish the policy recommendations stated above:

1. Conduct a thorough needs assessment to determine program areas that require research and developmental activities.
2. Publicly announce the issues to be addressed and request a letter of intent from interested parties.
3. Develop and conduct a series of training sessions on effective research and development activities for those who have submitted letters of intent.
4. Receive research and development proposals and review for compliance with standards for effective research. Where deficiencies are noted, provide technical assistance, when necessary, to improve the proposals.
5. Appoint a review committee to select those proposals which merit funding.
6. Provide technical assistance to the grantee to insure that everything possible has been done to facilitate successful completion of the project.
7. Upon completion of the various projects, validate those which have clearly produced a transportable conclusion.
8. Set aside a portion of these categorical funds to facilitate dissemination of the results of the validated activities, using project personnel as facilitators.
9. During the period of selection and operation of the approvable projects, provide time for the state staff to become apprised of those activities which yield transportable results so that each specialist will be able to apply them in providing technical assistance to local schools.

### Distribution of Program Funds

A recommendation in the 12th annual report of the Council referred to the procedure for disbursement of state and federal program funds to unified school districts. The recommendation called for a shift from what has become a perennially guaranteed share of these resources to be used at the discretion of the local education agency, to an incentive plan designed to nurture program enrichment or expansion. The

rationale used to support that suggested further study would be required to determine the impact of current funding practices on vocational programs.

The Council chose to pursue that study, using a survey (Appendix A) of chief school officers to ascertain the relative order of importance local superintendents attach to aspects of vocational programs that are supported with state and federal funds. They were asked to rank a given set of possibilities which included the following: (1) extended contracts, (2) equipment, (3) staff development, (4) student organizations, (5) instructional materials and supplies, (6) supervision of students in cooperative work experience, (7) retention of the vocational program, (8) and maintenance of current staffing patterns. They were also given the opportunity to indicate if they preferred the present funding practice over an alternate procedure based on a proposal for program improvement.

As indicated in Table I, program and staff retention were clearly identified as top priorities. The next highest rating was given to instructional materials, followed quite closely by equipment. The four remaining options rated similarly, in order of student supervision, staff development, extended contracts, and student organizations. On the second part of the survey, the respondents indicated a preference, by a margin of four to one, for the current funding practice based on full-time student equivalency.

TABLE I  
EXPENDITURE AREAS IN ORDER  
OF ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITY

| Range of<br>Funding | Expenditure Areas |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                     | 1                 | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    |
| 0-1000              | 5.46              | 4.75 | 5.25 | 5.42 | 3.75 | 6.33 | 1.92 | 2.75 |
| 1001-5000           | 6.09              | 4.33 | 5.35 | 5.64 | 3.59 | 5.56 | 2.24 | 2.71 |
| 5001-10000          | 5.26              | 4.19 | 5.74 | 5.89 | 3.77 | 5.84 | 1.78 | 3.11 |
| 10000-30000         | 4.93              | 4.87 | 5.71 | 6.50 | 3.31 | 5.21 | 1.59 | 3.00 |
| Over 30000          | 5.33              | 4.50 | 6.33 | 6.17 | 3.50 | 4.67 | 1.58 | 2.92 |
| Overall             | 5.69              | 4.43 | 5.59 | 5.84 | 3.60 | 5.57 | 1.93 | 2.81 |



An attempt was made to analyze the survey results in terms of relationship of responses in the two parts of the instrument. The eight items in the first part of the questionnaire were sub-divided into categories of program maintenance and program enrichment. Program and staff retention were defined as maintenance, while the rest of the items were interpreted to represent program improvement. There was a direct correlation between the two sets of responses, inasmuch as a higher rating was given to maintenance funding in both cases.

The Council has repeatedly taken the position in legislative advocacy and program evaluation that these supplemental state and federal resources should be directed toward those aspects of vocational education that make it cost prohibitive to local units. Those factors are almost universally identified in the profession as equipment and staff development. Therefore, the Council restates its commitment to the concept of funding on an incentive basis directed toward program enrichment. It would appear to serve most effectively as a means of institutionalizing change strategies on a statewide basis. Therefore, the previous recommendation is repeated for consideration by the State Board of Education.



### Recommendation

It is recommended that the State Board of Education consider alternatives to the present policy regarding distribution of state categorical aid to secondary schools. Such alternatives should include fiscal incentives to schools to improve and expand existing programs, and to add programs where there is a need. Further, such funding should be short-term and directed toward a specific objective rather than program maintenance.

The Council found the survey results to be somewhat disquieting as they do not mesh with the position on funding referenced in last year's annual report. It is obvious, reimbursement amounts notwithstanding, that local administrators prefer the existing procedures for distribution of program resources. It is difficult to understand this response inasmuch as it was accompanied frequently with comments to the effect that allocations were so insignificant that program approval was not worth the effort. Further, local school personnel often identify equipment as the most critical need, but they evidently do not support a change in funding policies that would target that need more directly.

# CHAPTER III

## Evaluation of Vocational Education

Chapter I of this report suggested some potential implications for education as perceived by the authors of recent major studies as well as the members of the Council. Among those listed was a reference to the need for on-going evaluation of the program. The critical nature of this exercise calls for an analysis of current practices along with recommendations to strengthen this function. Chapter III is designed to respond to that need.

### Introduction

The term evaluation, as used in education, has come to mean the process of determining how well educational goals are being met. In vocational education this requires the identification of program goals, and a systematic and critical look at how well and in what ways the program is reaching the goals it has set for itself. It is imperative that, as the structure for delivery of vocational and post-secondary education services is designed for the future, an evaluation system be developed to effectively measure the outcome of the proposed plan.

The chief purpose of evaluation is program improvement, several benefits of which are:

1. It causes administrators to clearly define school and program goals and to review these goals periodically.
2. It provides for active and thorough involvement of staff in the evaluation of their own programs.
3. It develops staff readiness to implement the changes and improvements resulting from the outcomes of the evaluation process.
4. It provides a basis for reporting, professionally and publicly, on the progress, success and areas of common concern faced by the program.
5. It generates additional financial and other forms of support when the unmet program needs and areas of concern are identified.
6. It communicates assurances as to the quality of education programs to the local board, the State Department of Education and the public by keeping them informed of program achievements and progress.

### The Existing Evaluation System in Kansas

Public institutions offering vocational education in Kansas currently utilize several evaluation plans, many of which are also referred to as accreditation. It is important that the subtle distinction between the terms evaluation and accreditation be understood.

The accreditation procedure is designed to assess the extent to which schools demonstrate that they have implemented a standard set of practices. Presumably there is some evidence gained from past observation that, if those certain activities have been carried out, the product or output will represent quality.

Evaluation, on the other hand, is perceived to be a measure of output. It is designed to measure the effectiveness of the activities in reaching goals. In other words, accreditation measures what is done, while evaluation measures how well it is done.

Community colleges in the state participate in an accreditation procedure wherein two separate visiting teams, one appointed by the North Central Association and the other by the State Department of Education, simultaneously review the findings of a standardized self-study of each institution. The state team typically consists of teachers and administrators from surrounding schools along with a few college and university personnel. Ordinarily, the team members are assigned to assess the area of administration or instruction in which they are involved in their home school. Accreditation based on this activity is typically granted for a period of five to ten years. Vocational programs within those institutions are also required to complete an evaluation instrument to meet the mandate of P.L. 94-482. The state's instrument that meets federal evaluation requirements is called K-PAR (Kansas Plan for Assistance and Review). One of the more pertinent findings in the K-PAR exercise, from the Council's point of view, is that local advisory committees are not involved extensively in evaluation and planning.

Until recently, area vocational/technical schools experienced a similar redundancy in evaluation. The accreditation exercise designed to comply with eligibility requirements for Basic Economic Opportunity Grants was developed and implemented in 1976. However, the five-year evaluation cycle required in vocational legislation adds a second and

entirely separate evaluation system, which in some cases overlaps the accreditation activity. Adjustments have been made in recent years to allow a school which offers vocational programs and which undertakes the accrediting exercise, to apply criteria from the vocational education accountability guidelines so that the repetition can be avoided.

Secondary schools also are required to undergo multiple evaluations. Thirty-six percent of the districts in the state participate in the North Central Accreditation procedure which is repeated on a seven-year cycle. The schools in this group that offer vocational programs along with those not seeking North Central accreditation are required to conduct a K-PAR review every five years. Again, current regulations permit schools undergoing the North Central Accreditation procedure to use criteria from latter exercise and thus avoid duplication.

Another form of evaluation of the state's vocational program is the annual accountability report required from the State Department of Education by the federal government. This document must include evidence of compliance with rules relating to expenditure of specially targeted funds as well as indicators of success in achieving state plan goals and objectives.

The State Department of Education has recently developed an evaluation/accreditation system to replace those instruments which have been used for the past five years (K-PAR). The new model is currently being field-tested in several locations and will, with appropriate revisions, be implemented in the fall of 1985.

### Conclusions

The preceding narrative indicates the relative importance of evaluation, some judgments of its inadequacy, and a summary of current practices within the state. The perceptions described above suggest some possible concerns. They are:

1. There is a great deal of repetition in the evaluation process.
2. There is little evidence that the findings in evaluation impact significantly on the planning process, particularly at the state level.
3. Analysis of K-PAR findings indicates that local advisory committees are marginally involved in planning and evaluation.
4. The fact that instructors and administrators from schools in close proximity to the school being evaluated comprise the visiting teams in evaluation exercises leads to some speculation relative to the objectivity of the evaluation process.

5. Evaluation appears to be an intermittent process rather than an on-going activity.

Based on the preceding information and assumptions, the following recommendations pertaining to evaluation are proposed:

1. The State Department of Education should provide the leadership and focus for refinement of the evaluation and school improvement process.
2. The State Department of Education should ensure that evaluation findings impact on long-range planning.
3. The State Department of Education and local educational institutions should develop procedures to facilitate greater involvement of advisory committees in evaluation and planning.
4. Whenever possible, qualified independent third party evaluators should be utilized to evaluate programs and institutions according to measurable goals and objectives.
5. The State Department of Education should provide leadership for implementation of a plan for program and institutional improvement based, in part, on evaluation findings.



## CHAPTER IV

# Coordination of Employment and Training Programs

Vocational education, because it has the unique function of providing skill training, cannot afford to function in a vacuum. There is a large number of agencies which also serve to facilitate the delivery of employable skills. As has been mentioned, the linkage and coordination among these agencies was made the major focus of last year's annual report. To treat the subject at length would be redundant. However, there are some specific issues that require the attention of the State Board of Education.

The previous findings essentially indicated a need for an effective means of conducting policy review, at the cabinet level of state government, over all agencies involved in the various employment and training activities. While the structure for such an organization was approved by the Governor, there has been little noticeable impact. The initial intensity given to this function has diminished immensely. This appears to have been largely a result of an assumption that the State Employment and Training Council has the official responsibility for policy articulation. It is important that the State Board seek clarification of what has grown out of initiative they took in requesting a strategy for policy coordination. The present status is not what was perceived by the Council to be appropriate.

Many of the same conditions relating to coordination still exist, one in particular being that the current structure is still driven largely by federal initiatives. States have become virtually captive to a series of related and unrelated federal programs which do not take into consideration the demographics which make them unique. Hence, criteria for organization and structure of these programs, while proving suitable to some areas of the country, provide no latitude at all for alternate strategies in other areas.

While problems still exist, it must be observed that some noteworthy procedural changes have been made in Kansas to facilitate coordination. One in particular is that the educational institutions are more consistently represented on local planning councils associated with the Jobs Training Partnership Act. This should provide a better opportunity to assess the capacity of the existing delivery system to provide necessary training and thus reduce unnecessary duplication.

Further, there appears to be some structured activity at the state management level to foster coordination. This activity is commendable and

those who have provided the initiative for facilitating closer cooperation are encouraged to continue this effort. It is imperative that the State Board of Education remain constantly apprised of the status of federal programs and pending legislation so that it can maintain its vital role in influencing legislative changes for program improvement and coordination.





# Advisory Council for Vocational Education

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November 23, 1983

MEMO TO: Unified School District Superintendents  
FROM: Lawrence Foth, Executive Director  
SUBJECT: Funding of USD Vocational Programs

As you are well aware, the current administration in Washington is inclined toward "block grants" for educational programs. We have already seen a large number of special initiatives grouped into a single federal program. Our concern, and the reason for this inquiry, is what impact this approach may have if it is directed toward vocational education. You can assist us in this effort by taking a few minutes to respond to some of the following issues.

We understand, based on State Department of Education records, that you received \$\_\_\_\_\_ in federal vocational funds and \$\_\_\_\_\_ in state vocational funds during the last academic year. If funding policies were to be redirected in the future, what changes would occur in your state approved vocational programs? Please rate the following expenditure areas in order of importance to you as an administrator. For example, you might rate "retain program" as number 1, "current staffing level" number 2, and so on with "equipment" rating an 8. We would infer, from that kind of response, that your first expenditure redirection would relate to equipment and the program would be the last to be cut. We want to derive from this a summary of what we might lose statewide if funding patterns are changed.

- Extended contracts for teachers
- Equipment to upgrade programs
- Conferences for professional development of teachers
- Vocational student organization activities
- Instructional materials and supplies
- Supervision of students in training on the job (cooperative programs)
- Retain our vocational program
- Retain current staff levels
- Others (Please specify)

We would also like to receive your reaction to the strategy of distributing federal vocational dollars to secondary schools on a program enrichment/expansion grant rather than the present system. An example might be a goal to diversify your industrial arts program which would require different kinds of equipment, some additional schooling for staff, and a modest facilities modification. Please respond by checking your preference of the two following statements:

- We prefer that federal vocational education funds continue to be distributed under the present formula arrangement based on full-time equivalency.
- We would prefer to see federal vocational funds distributed on the basis of a project plan for program enrichment/expansion.

We know that you are busy, particularly at this time of year. However, it's important that we get some perception of your feelings at the local level so that we can appropriately advise the State Board of Education and our representatives in Washington on policy questions. Please return this survey at your earliest convenience, preferably before December 6.

Thanks for your assistance.

LF:bls

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